

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----120810 151618Z /46
Z O 151540Z MAR 78 ZFF6
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 1945
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT FLASH
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 3530

EXDIS -- DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

DEPARTMENT PASS NEA/IAI FOR AMBASSADOR LEWIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IS, LE
SUBJECT: WEIZMAN ON SOUTHERN LEBANON

REF: TEL AVIV 3528

1. WEIZMAN CALLED ME A FEW MINUTES AGO. HE HAD JUST RETURNED TO THE MINISTRY FROM A QUICK TRIP TO SOUTH LEBANON FOR A FIRST HAND VIEW OF MILITARY OPERATIONS.
2. HE SAID THINGS WERE GOING WELL. THE IDF HAD "KILLED QUITE A FEW PALESTINIANS BUT SOME OF THE BASTARDS HAD ESCAPED." THERE WERE SOME IDF CASUALTIES BUT HE DID NOT YET HAVE ANY FIRM FIGURES.
3. HE SAID THAT IF HE RETURNED TO TEL AVIV FROM TONIGHT'S SPECIAL CABINET MEETING AT A REASONABLE HOUR HE WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO ME. OTHERWISE HE WANTED TO GET TOGETHER IN THE MORNING. I REPLIED THAT I WAS AT HIS DISPOSITION AT ANY TIME BECAUSE I TOO WANTED TO SEE HIM AS SOON

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AS POSSIBLE. I SAID I WAS BEGINNING TO HEAR RUMORS THAT HE WAS PLANNING TO KEEP FORCES IN SOUTH LEBANON AFTER HIS MILITARY OPERATIONS WERE COMPLETED. THIS WAS DISTURBING NEWS FOR IT HAD IMPLICATIONS FAR BEYOND THE SECURITY PROBLEMS AFFECTING ISRAELIS NORTHERN FRONTIERS. I ADDED THAT I ALSO HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN WASHINGTON WAS FULLY

APPRISED OF THE GOI'S INTENTIONS IN REGARD TO REMAINING
IN SOUTH LEBANON.

3. WEIZMAN REPLIED HE UNDERSTOOD THIS AND THAT HE HAD
NO INTENTION OF "PLAYING GAMES" WITH THE U.S. WE SHOULD
UNDERSTAND THAT HIS PERSONAL VIEWS WERE AS FOLLOWS (AND
HE ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THEY WOULD BECOME THE
GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS FOLLOWING TONIGHT'S CABINET
MEETING);

--AFTER MOUNTING SUCH A MAJOR OPERATION HE WANTED
ASSURANCES THAT HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO REPEAT IT IN A FEW MONTH'S
TIME.

--THESE ASSURANCES INCLUDED NO FATAH AND NO SA-IQA FORCES
SOUTH OF THE LITANI.

--THESE ASSURANCES COULD BE IN THE FORM OF UNWRITTEN
UNDERSTANDINGS DELINEATING "RED LINES" BEYOND WHICH FORCES WOULD
NOT MOVE, SUCH AS THOSE ISRAEL HAD WITH JORDAN,
SYRIA AND EGYPT.

--THE GOI WOULD ALSO WANT A CLEAR-CUT UNDER-
STANDING WITH THE GOL REGARDING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR KEEPING THE AREA SOUTH OF THE LITANI PURGED OF
PALESTINIAN FORCES (THIS WAS NOT FURTHER SPELLED OUT IN OUR
HURRIED PHONE CONVERSATION.).

4. WEIZMAN SAID THAT ONCE THESE UNDERSTANDINGS WERE
REACHED THE IDF WOULD WITHDRAW. BUT IT SHOULD BE CLEAR
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TO EVERYONE INVOLVED THAT THE INSTANT THE PALESTINAINS
TRIED TO ROCKET ANY OF ISRAEL'S NORTHERN SETTLEMENT
OR TO INFILTRATE BACK INTO THE SAME AREAS, HE WOULD
"PUNCH THEM INTO OBLIVION." HE WANTED US TO UNDERSTAND
THAT EVERYBODY IS FED UP WITH THE ISTUATION IN THE
NORTH. THE ISRAELIS HAD SHOWN GREAT PATIENCE AND
FOREBEARANCE IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS. IN THE PROCESS
"A LOT OF ISRAELIS HAVE BEEN KILLED." THE TIME HAD
COME TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION--PERMANENTLY.

5. WEIZMAN ASSURED ME THAT HE HAD INSISTED TO
HIS TROOP COMMANDERS THAT AS FEW CIVILIANS AS
HUMANLY POSSIBLE SHOULD BE AFFECTED BY THE MILITARY
OPERATIONS. HE THOUGHT THAT THUS FAR IN THE BORDER OPERATIONS
VERY FEW CIVILIANS HAD BECOME
INVOLVED SINCE MOST OF THEM HAD FLED NORTHWARDS BEFORE
THE ATTACK STARTED. HE WAS LESS CERTAIN ABOUT THE
AIR RAIDS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD LAID THE LAW DOWN
TO THE IDF PILOTS THAT THERE WERE TO BE NO MORE
EL AZIAS (THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP OBLITERATED BY THE ISRAELIS
LAST FALL. ALL THE SAME, HE ADMITTED TO SOME
DISQUIET THAT SOME INNOCENT CIVILIANS MAY HAVE BEEN

KILLED IN THE BOMB ATTACKS, ESPECIALLY THE ATTACK ON THE DOCKS
SOUTH OF BEIRUT.

6. WEIZMAN SAID HE HAD JUST FLOWN BACK FROM NAQURA
WHERE THE SITUATION WAS QUIET. HE SAID THE LOCAL
POPULATION DID NOT APPEAR TO BE DELIRIOUSLY HAPPY
TO SEE ISRAELI TROOPS, "BUT NEITHER DID THEY RUN
AWAY."

7. I TOLD WEIZMAN THAT BASED ON WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME
ABOUT ISRAELI INTENTIONS, I THOUGHT IT ALL THE MORE
NECESSARY FOR US TO HAVE A TALK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
I REPEATED I WAS PROFOUNDLY CONCERNED ABOUT HIS
PLANS FOR THE RETENTION OF ISRELI FORCES IN
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SOUTH LEBANON. I ADDED THAT THEY WOULD BE THERE FOR A
VERY LONG TIME, I THOUGHT, BEFORE HE EVER GOT THE
SORTS OF ASSURANCES HE WAS ASKING FOR. HE PROMISED
TO CALL ME AS SOON AS HE RETURNS TONIGHT FROM
JERUSALEM.

8. COMMENT: IN LIGHT OF THIS CONVERSATION IT IS ALL THE MORE
IMPORTANT TO THAVE YOUR VIEWS AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE
THIS EVENING ON HOW WE PLAY THIS SITUATION (SEE
TEL AVIV 3528).
VIETS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, PALESTINIANS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV03530
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: P840157-1916, N780003-0470
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780363/aaaacbpw.tel
Line Count: 147
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 81384bc6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 TEL AVIV 3528
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3318052
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CHANGED> MCM 20040618
Subject: WEIZMAN ON SOUTHERN LEBANON
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, PBOR, IS, LE, (WEIZMAN, EZER)
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/81384bc6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014